

HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

• REALM GUIDE #14 •

THE SCORPION LANDS OF OLD

Introduction

Older than the race of men, the scorpionmen have haunted the wide valley and steep hills for millennia. Countless times they have risen to power and fallen into slavery. Once again they are on the ascent, for a new power has arisen, one whose will has united the divided tribes under his banner. Once again, the shadow of the scorpion has fallen across the central desert. This supplement expands on material found in *Hellfrost: Land of Fire*.

ORIGINS OF THE SCORPIONMEN

The scorpionmen are in no doubt about their origin—they are the creation of Chactinax, the venomous god of their kind, made in his image. Other races tell different stories. One myth says that during the God War, Iblis was sorely wounded. His blood fell to the mortal realm, a hissing rain of black ichor. Where the drops landed, a scorpionman was born from the sand.

Another tells that they were once a race of men, but their evil ways caused them to be cursed by the gods. A variant of this concerns a city of righteous men, whom Iblis either poisoned because they rejected him or seduced into wickedness. Whatever method the stories use, the result is always the same. Another says they were a Bedu tribe who fell prey to a cursed relic, or who desired to be better able to survive in the harsh desert and pleaded their forms be changed into something more suitable. While the other gods refused, Iblis was only too pleased to help. That they may have voluntarily chose to alter their form through dark magic is a popular story among Faithful, especially those who consider magic heretical and a pathway to damnation.

POWERS OF THE SCORPION KING

The Venom of Chactinax, leader of the scorpionmen, better known in the myths of outsiders as the Scorpion King, is completely unknown to the distant city dwellers. Indeed, most who dwell within sight of the sea believe the scorpionmen died out long ago. Even the Bedu whose ancestral lands border the desolate region know the name of the Scorpion King only as a whisper on the wind, a story to scare children by day and adults by night.

Those who have heard the name agree he is a scorpionman of immense size, though accounts vary from twice as large as normal to a monster that dwarfs even the mightiest war elephant. Perhaps, as some claim, he is not of this world, but a herald of Chactinax sent to give his creations one last chance to redeem themselves. Stories about his powers are

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RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in the Scorpion Lands.

* **Land of Treachery I:** The treacherous nature of Chactinax has tainted the very land and all those who trespass here. Each morning, every character must make a Spirit roll.

Having Code of Honor grants a +1 bonus, as does Heroic, while Common Bond and Loyal each give a +2 bonus. Being Greedy (Minor), Stubborn, and/or Vengeful (Minor) incurs a -1 penalty, while Greedy (Major), Mean, and Vengeful (Major) warrant a -2 penalty. All modifiers stack.

With success, the hero is unaffected by the treacherous aura for the day.

On a failure, the GM can force the character to commit a treacherous act once during that day. This might include refusing to go to a wounded or outnumbered comrade's assistance, or dropping a beneficial spell he cast on the chosen victim just as he is being attacked. The character can resist this urge, but to do so he must spend a benny.

On a critical failure, the GM may force the character to commit an act of treachery he cannot resist performing.

Players who actually voluntarily roleplay a suitably treacherous act should be rewarded with a benny. No more than one benny per game day can be earned in this way, and the act of treachery must have potentially dire consequences for the victim.

* **Land of Treachery II:** Not even the words and actions of explorers are safe from treachery. No character in the Scorpion Lands can use a benny to reroll a critical failure.

* **Scorpion Magic:** *Beast friend* and *summon beast* spells that affect scorpions are cast at +1 here.

* **Survival:** The Scorpion Lands of Old is made up of three regions for the purpose of finding food and water.

The central valley, Scorpion Hills, and southern slopes of the Mountains of Malice are treated as rocky desert. Survival rolls are made at -2.

In the Steaming Maze (p. 6), there is plentiful water (though some of which needs to cool before drinking it) and many species of birds. Survival rolls are made at +2.

On the lower southern slopes of the Firebarrier Mountains and lower northern slopes of the Mountains of Malice, extending about ten miles into the valley, any water is extremely salty, as are the scrub grasses that grow here. Survival rolls to find edible food and potable water are made at -4.

* **You're on Your Own:** There is no civilized life in the Scorpion Lands. Characters cannot purchase or sell equipment here, forcing them to live on whatever they bring with them or can scavenge from fallen foes.

equally fantastic, though in many cases they are closer to the truth than storytellers would dare to believe. Whether these powers are a natural occurrence, the result of dire spells, or gifts from his deity is unknown.

His skin of glittering black plates is said to be so thick that even the keenest blade glances off it. Some storytellers say his skin is so black that it absorbs light, making him indistinct, a mobile, malevolent shadow. Others say the way the light glitters from the scales is hypnotic.

Unlike a normal scorpionman, the Scorpion King has immense pincers instead of hands. These are so powerful they can crush rocks to dust and smash columns of stone as thick as a man in half with a single swipe. His sting, which is said to be as long as a spear, can punch through the thickest armor like it was a sheet of paper. Worse is his venom. One tale proclaims it is so potent it can kill even a rukh with a single drop. Others say it drives mortals insane, dissolves flesh and bone, or even transforms victims into scorpionmen.

Naturally, he has authority over all lesser scorpions, and can even create them from his own body. He can shed a single plate, causing it to become a swarm of stinging arachnids, while spilling even a single drop of his black blood gives birth to a giant scorpion.

Exploration

In terms of finding food and water, the Scorpion Lands are more forgiving than some areas. Water is hardly plentiful, but the rocky terrain of the wide valley, hills, and mountain slopes is home to many species of animal, and for those who know where to look, there is sufficient water. This is not to say survival is easy everywhere in the region. The sides of the valley are dotted with inhospitable salt flats, and the eastern end is a geothermic region of boiling pools and scalding geysers.

Although the name tells of the race that once dwelt on its surface and that now lurks unseen in the stygian hollows of the world, the region is home to many varieties of scorpions, both small and giant. The wide plain is mostly safe, but for those who wish to dig in the many ruins caution is advised, for scorpions love to make their nests just below the sand, in the shade provided by low walls and toppled pillars.

The artificial landscape, created by sentient beings, speaks of power and decay in equal measure. On the one hand it is a land of conquerors who enslaved many peoples and who raised great cities and temples. On the other hand, the ruins of jinn outposts and Hekatic settlements speak of a conquered land, one ravaged by wars long ago. But it is not the landscape or its deadly inhabitants that poses the biggest threat to explorers. The very air is steeped in the vile treachery that Chactinax preaches, and its unholy essence soon gnaws at the soul of those weak of spirit. A man may, by his nature, be charitable and caring, but within this accursed land he may withhold aid from even his dearest friends. The nomads that live near the borders have many tales of travel-

ers who died because they would not share resources, or who found some great treasure but were betrayed by their comrades and murdered in the night.

Even fate is treacherous, for a man's sword may unwittingly strike a comrade, a healer may inflict more harm than good, and a man who wishes to pronounce a blessing may speak a curse.

To the rest of the world it may be the Scorpion Lands of Old, but to the nomads it is the Land of Treachery.

Major Locales

Few maps detailing the Scorpion Lands exist, but this does not mean it is an empty wasteland. For those willing to brave the climate and hostile natives, there is much to explore.

THE BLACK IDOL

Half-buried in the floor of the stony valley is an enormous black idol. Made of a hard stone that has resisted the battering of wind and sand for millennia, it is carved to represent some fell deity, ferocious demon lord, or mighty jinn noble. All that is visible is the torso and head. The statue stands some fifteen yards tall. The tongue is rolled out, and is so long it touches the ground, creating a steep ramp to the gaping maw. Coiling outward from the mouth, as if searching for prey, are four snaking tentacles. Nomads claim it is possible to enter the mouth—it is certainly tall enough to accommodate a grown man—but none who do so are ever seen again. Naturally, they believe such unfortunate victims have been eaten by whatever entity the idol imitates.

That it was erected by the scorpionmen is highly debatable, for all their gods and demons have scorpion tails. It is possible it was raised by the death-worshipping inhabitants of Hekata, but it of a completely different artistic style to the countless others that dot that withered and accursed realm. What also makes it unlikely that either culture erected the statue is that while the valley is littered with ruins, none stand within 20 miles of the black idol. Even in ancient times, it seems the sight was regarded as an evil place.

The idol's mouth is actually a teleporter. Those who step inside are transported to a decaying city of unfathomable age that lies deep within a vast cavern network deep underground. Ancient beyond measure, the teleporter is faulty. While it transports people to the lost city, it cannot bring them back. If another exit exists, it lies elsewhere in the subterranean world.

The city is only partially abandoned. The builders, a humanoid race with tentacles around their mouths and an abhorrence of sunlight, have sunk into madness and decadence. Those who would dare to trespass might well find much unknown lore and certainly could live like kings on the rich material rewards, but they may also literally lose their minds, for the unholy denizens feed

on the brains of sentient beings, both for sustenance and to absorb their abilities.

BOOK OF A MILLION NAMES

Most storytellers, imams, and clerics know at least one story about the Book of One Million Names. Unfortunately for those who might wish to seek out the tome, these are as varied as other tales.

One says that Hekata's dark magicians created a book in which were listed the names of one million fell spirits, denizens of the Bottomless Pit. According to legend, were all these names ever to be read aloud one after the other in the correct order (exactly what constitutes the correct order varies by storyteller), the gates of the Bottomless Pit will be thrown open.

Another tells that the gods gave Suleiman the names of all one million gods, so that men might know of their wisdom and grace. Before his death, Suleiman hid the book, for he deemed that men were not yet ready to receive such wisdom, though in future they might be.

A similar version speaks of the book containing the names of one million greater jinn banished from the mortal realm by Suleiman during the War of Copper Jars. Uttering their names would recall these mighty entities to the world of men once more. Variants on this theme speak of the location of a million jinn bound into copper jars, or the jinn Suleiman destroyed.

Over time, many citizens have come to believe the book lies somewhere in the Scorpion Lands. Likely this location arose in stories because of its proximity to the jinn heartland, though it may be the many ruins that dot the landscape gave birth to the story of a hidden crypt. Many have searched, but the physical location of the book remains as elusive as the truth about its contents.

THE LIGHTNING STONE

Whether or not the cyclops were created by the jinn as armorers is highly debatable. One legend of dubious authenticity claims they were devout worshippers of Malysangaratharinos (see Temple of Malice, p. 6) who were somehow changed by the living dragon god. A few scholars claim Suleiman transformed khamsin jinn into a mockery of human form as punishment for their sins. What is more certain is that they alone possess the knowledge to create spears of lightning. Contrary to legends, though, this is not an innate ability of the race.

High in the Mountains of Malice stands a crumbling ruin, all that remains of the cyclops former homeland. Battered by wind and time, it reflects their gradual decline into oblivion. Concealed in the heart is the true source of the cyclops' legendary ability—the Lighting Stone. A black stone measuring some three feet across, it is flecked with blue-white flashes. Tapping it produces a ringing sound like metal on metal, and gives rise to powerful sparks. It is these miniature lightning bolts the cyclops have learned to harness in their weapons.

The Lighting Stone would make a gift worthy of any

CLERICS OF CHACTINAX

Although an inhuman deity, characters of any race may worship Chactinax and serve as clerics. His cult is illegal among civilized races, though, and those found to be worshippers will be subject to torture and execution, the punishment awaiting all assassins who come before the courts.

Training: In order to deter traitors, every candidate must submit to the sting of a scorpion. Those who survive are accepted as novitiates. Before he learns anything else, the apprentice must learn to be stealthy. Tests involve crossing creaking boards, sneaking up on sentries (played by full clerics), and tailing people. Each failure is punished by another sting. Advanced training involves planning assassinations, breaking into protected compounds, and escape techniques.

At the end of their training, each novitiate is secretly assigned a target for assassination. In some instances this may be a fellow student, while in others it is an unimportant outsider whose murder has been contracted to the cult. The novitiate is given one week to plan and execute the deed. Those who fail are punished by being stung to death by scorpions—the cult does not tolerate failure.

Prayers: Worshippers call upon Chactinax in a variety of ways, but always with reference to scorpions. Prayers often begin with phrases like “I am the vengeful sting who seeks your guidance.”

Adventures: Chactinax's clerics are masters of death. Any adventurers concerning them are likely to involve planning and carrying out assassinations. Although regarded as an evil sect, the cult considers itself neutral, favoring neither good nor evil. Thus, a cleric may be hired to remove an orc chieftain, a khem-hekau mage, or even a servant of Iblis, rather than a benevolent ruler.

Character Guidelines: Priests are expected (though not required) to broker contracts and scout out targets and their security measures. Investigation, Notice, Persuasion, and Streetwise are their core skills. High Charisma is useful, but Charismatic should be taken rather than Attractive—the last thing you want is to stand out from the crowd when tailing a target.

Paladins are assassins, favoring subtlety over overt violence. Stealth allows one to steal in, commit one's fell deed, and escape undetected. A skilled assassin also needs Climbing, Lockpicking, and Notice. Although paladins are not of larcenous nature, the Thief Edge boosts three of these skills. Acrobat is also favored, especially if one has to make a daring getaway, and Assassin is an obvious choice.

Unless an assassin wants to fall victim to his own poisons or succumb to scorpion stings during rituals, a high Vigor is recommended for all clergy.

ruler or warlord, for with it in his possession he could equip his army with devastating weapons. The few expeditions that have tried to enslave the cyclops since the vanquishing of the jinn have all ended in death and failure, for the cyclops defend their home with fanatical zeal from all interlopers.

THE MANY-COLORED SANDS

While uncommon, rain does fall in the wide valley that leads to the Heart of Fire. Much of it disappears through cracks into the dark world beneath, but enough flows down the slopes to give birth to small rivers. As it flows, the water dissolves rock salts. When the water reaches the rocky valley floor, it quickly forms wide, shallow lakes. Over time, these evaporate, leaving behind alkali flats of varying colors as the salt is deposited. Storytellers frequently call this region, which borders both sides of the valley, the Rainbow Sands. One famous story says rainbows were formed when Duamutef kicked the salty dust into the sky in a bid to dry out rain sent by Apsu before it fell onto the desert.

Hekata's expansion into this region was not one of pure military conquest or a lust for treasure. The alkali flats are a rich source of natron, a vital ingredient in Hekatic mummification rituals. While the Salt Basin yields a purer source, that harvest was reserved for pharaohs and senior priests. Most nobles and important bureaucrats had to make do with the inferior natron found here.

On the northern side of the valley, almost directly opposite the source of the River Ankh, the Hekatics founded a small city. Known as Niwt-em-Netry (literally, “City of Natron”), it existed purely to ensure the empire received a steady supply of natron. There is little to see on the surface—after Hekata fell, the scorpionmen tore down the buildings, leaving naught but a few layers of stone now swallowed by the desert.

The cliffs above the city are a different story, though. In the city's early days, a small number of noble tombs were cut into the cliff and sealed with a stone slab proclaiming the name of the family interred, as well as plentiful curses to ward off thieves. As the city grew and the number of dead began to mount, so the architects ceased creating individual family tombs. Using what already existed as a starting point, they expanded the funerary complex into a sprawling necropolis of interlinked burial chambers.

By the time the scorpionmen wreaked their vengeance on the city below, Hekata had already been consumed by the surge of necromantic energy. Some of that unholy force seeped through the mountains and into the necropolis. While some of the tombs nearest the entrance were looted, those deeper in were never troubled, for within the echoing chambers and dark corridors shambled mummified nobles and the skeletal remains of servants buried alongside them.

None of the nobles possessed the fabulous wealth of the pharaohs, but there is plentiful treasure for those brave enough to fight the undead inhabitants and cunning enough to avoid the many traps.

THE SCORPION'S NEST

Population: Unknown

Ruler: The Black Scorpion

The first Assassins were the product of scorpionmen magic and training. When the race fell to the Hekatic Empire, their human agents vanished into the desert. For nigh on 2,000 years they remained hidden, emerging back into the light only with the arrival of the Anari.

Few even among their ranks know the true origins of the Assassins, and only its members know that a seemingly innocuous ruin high in the western Mountains of Malice, overlooking the Scorpion Hills, is the site of the infamous Scorpion's Nest. Exactly when the Assassin's returned to their spiritual homeland is unknown. Most members believe it was sometime between the jinn enslavement of the scorpionmen and the end of the jinn occupation, but there is evidence they operated from here long before that time, either concealing their activities from the nearby jinn or operating with their blessing.

In all honesty, few Assassins ever visit the Nest. Many are recruited and trained locally, aware that the fortress exists, yet unsure of its location. Those summoned here are usually invited to receive a great reward or dire punishment, and which awaits is discovered only on reaching the remote bastion.

The Nest is often portrayed in stories as a mighty fortress. The reality is far less grand—the Nest is naught but an extensive cavern network and a few crumbling guard towers erected by the jinn serving as sentry posts. As the Assassins operate in secret within society, so their masters live and work out of sight.

Many perils await those who would dare to spy on the Assassins or try and murder the Black Scorpion, the head of the order. Though remote, it is still a training ground for assassins, and the corridors are filled with many traps and roving sentinels. An army wishing to lay siege must spread its forces thin, for numerous tunnels, some of which stretch for miles, connect to the main complex.

Ironically, the Nest is not merely a place of death. Knowledge is power, and the Assassins have built up a library to equal any found in the great cities. Access is open to any Assassin, and Investigation rolls on any topic have a +2 bonus. It is also rumored the order has a secret vault in which are housed a variety of relics, either taken from victims or handed out to members for very the assassination of very high-profile targets.

THE SINGING STATUES

Standing on the plain between the Scorpion Hills and the northern dunes are two enormous statues. Weathering has eroded all trace of features, and the stones are badly cracked. It is evident they represent seated figures, and are mostly likely representations of humans. The pair stand approximately 20 yards apart and face west. They have proven resistant to ushabti magic.

What makes them unusual is not their placement, though that does raise many questions, but their ability

to sing. Cynics often comment that the statues' singing is actually wind blowing over and through the cracks in their bodies, but the sound is only heard when there is no wind. The singing varies from a low grumble to a high pitch, leading many nomads to believe the statues represent a male and female. The sounds have a melodic quality, but they are not true songs—no one has been able to deduce any specific words in any tongue.

Though possibly remnants of ancient Hekata, edifices marking their recently conquered territory perhaps, most legends place their creation at the feet of Suleiman. Each is supposedly a majin jinn who refused to bow before the great prophet. Suleiman cursed them, declaring they would stand an eternal vigil over the desert and sing the praises of the gods or the Creator (depending on one's faith) until the end of time. One variant says they were khamsin jinn transformed into stone to prevent them moving, a great punishment for such normally free-willed and mobile creatures.

Of course, there are other legends associated with them. Some storytellers speak of the singing being clues to a fabulous treasure, or the mourning for a lost city. Others say they are cursed lovers, unable to see or touch each other, and forced to communicate their eternal love by singing to each other. Until the singing can be deciphered, legends concerning the singing statues will undoubtedly continue to grow.

THE STEAMING CITY

The eastern peaks of the Mountains of Malice comprise many extinct or long-dormant volcanoes. Within the wide crater of one sleeping volcano is a lush, dense jungle, fed by hot springs that bubble up through the surrounding rock. A blanket of mist hangs almost level with the treetops, concealing the landscape beneath. Due to the mist, lighting conditions within the crater are always one step worse than outside.

The air inside the crater is hot and humid, an uncomfortable change for those used to the dry heat of the desert. Within minutes one is soaked in sweat. Clothes clinging cloyingly to flesh, scrolls risk become sodden, and given just a day or two fabrics begin to rot away.

Small creatures, such as various birds, mice, rats, snakes, and spiders call the jungle home, but there are more fearsome denizens. Venturing toward the center of the crater, one sees signs of sentient life. Towering statues of crocodile-headed humans, cracked with age and the incessant groping of vines, lie half-hidden in the undergrowth. What appears to be a tangle of jungle might be a stone building, its outline all but lost to the vegetation. At the very core stands a ziggurat, its lower half covered in vines, its flat top hidden in the thick layer of mist. This imposing structure is the only true remains of the great city that stood here.

Long ago, when the race of man was young, the gator-men explored what was then a grassland. Atop this peak they erected a city of learning, for the climate suited their needs and the mountain's slopes were ample protection

NEW DISCIPLE EDGE

DISCIPLE OF CHACTINAX

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Vigor d8+, Faith d8+, Fighting d8+, follower of Chactinax

Chactinax grants his chosen poisonous powers. By spending a benny before damage is rolled (but after a successful attack), the damage inflicted by the character cannot be Soaked for this attack only. The character also gains +2 to Vigor rolls to resist poison.

NEW WEIRD EDGE

TREMOR SENSE

Requirements: Novice, Notice d8+

Many desert predators can sense minute disturbances in the sand, alerting them to approaching prey. The character has developed, or been gifted, with a similar sense. The hero is automatically aware of any burrowing creature than comes within 2" of him either vertically or horizontally. The character cannot be surprised by burrowing creatures while he is awake, and even while asleep he is allowed a Notice roll at -2 to sense the disturbance and rouse himself. He halves darkness penalties against foes standing on sand within 5".

from attackers. Cut off when the swamps dried up, the inhabitants grew more and more decadent. Many centuries of inbreeding have led not only to greatly diminished numbers, but a level of barbarism that the gatomen left behind many millennia ago.

Ironically, the lost tribe, now fear the ziggurat, and rarely venture close. To their barbaric minds it is a place of vengeful spirits. Lying within are their achievements of old, texts on astrology and geometry, discourses on the history of an age men speak of only as a mythical age, and the mummified remains of their once powerful priests, along with the treasures that accompanied them to the next life.

THE STEAMING MAZE

The eastern end of the Scorpion Lands border the Heart of Fire. Extending across the entire valley and snaking some 50 miles west from the volcanoes toward the distant valley mouth is an area known to the nomadic tribes of the central desert as the Steaming Maze.

Hot springs erupt regularly, drenching the land in steaming water rich in iron salts. As the water evaporates, it becomes trapped by its own salt deposits, forming a patchwork of small, green pools separated by raised pathways of crusty yellow-red salt residue. Such a process

does not occur spontaneously, and the area known as the Steaming Maze has taken many centuries to form.

Bedu who have visited this distant part of the land claim Suleiman slew many ifrits here. The water is their blood, diluted by sporadic rains since the great battle. The constant bubbles that break the surface are supposedly curses uttered as the jinn died. The salt pathways are supposedly formed by the ifrits' withered flesh and crumbling bones.

Travel through the region is laborious, and not without risks. Salt pathways may crumble underfoot, forcing one to either wade through the hot water and risk burns (Vigor roll each hour to avoid a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises), or turn around and find another path. Scalding geysers frequently erupt, sending boiling water high into the air; some pools are hot enough to scald flesh in an instant; and others are deep enough that anyone who steps into one will sink like a stone and vanish from sight.

Despite the many dangers, Bedu tribes visit here every few years. The waters are rich not only in minerals, but also in a certain algae beloved by flamingoes. Rising out of the steam, one may catch sight of short mounds with a hollow top. These are flamingo nests, and they are always found in areas of warm but not boiling water, and where geysers rarely erupt. While the eggs are a much valued source of food, the nomads usually arrive after the eggs have hatched, for it is the chicks they want. After clipping their wings, they raise the chicks to adulthood, and sell them to rich nobles in the distant cities.

TEMPLE OF MALICE

Most folk believe the mountains were named because of the scorpionmen who dwelt here in days of old, or for the jinn, for whom the mountains marked a natural border to their territory. Neither supposition is correct, however.

Before the rise of even the ophidae and scorpionmen, in an age when writing was unknown, the mountains were home to a titanic storm dragon known as Malysangaratharinos (Malys for short). The primitive races of the desert worshipped the drake as a god, for such was its size and power that no mortal could harm it. To honor the living god, they erected a temple in her honor.

According to myths passed down through the ages, the temple measured a hundred yards long by 20 yards wide. Tall columns, each carved to represent a storm dragon swirling upward into the sky, wings folded, stood at regular intervals around the edge, though they supported no roof. No altar stood in the temple, for Malysangaratharinos would lie here in person to accept worship. A deep shaft lay somewhere near the entrance steps, into which her subjects would throw offerings of gold, silver, and precious stones.

Dragons may live for a thousand years or more, but they are not immortal. Malys eventually died, though none can say for sure where her colossal bones might lay. Her forced worshippers abandoned the temple and

it fell into ruin. Descendents of the great wyrm still inhabit the mountains, and are sometimes seen swirling over a certain valley.

The hole in which offerings were made was too small for an adult dragon to enter, and it may be that a great treasure lies buried beneath the toppled pillars and cracked paving stones of the temple. Of course, first one has to reach the temple site without attracting the attention of the keen-eyed storm drakes who call these mountains home, or the cyclops tribes, who still come here to worship.

PERSONS OF NOTE

While no civilized creatures call the Scorpion Lands home, there are a few who walk the wastes.

FAROUK DAR-JABBAH

A Beda nomad, Farouk can be found loitering anywhere along the trade roads between Black Palm, Clearwater, and Dry Water Oasis. A skilled tracker and guide, he is willing to guide parties into the Scorpion Lands for a suitable price. Unfortunately for those who hire his services, the trip may be their last.

Farouk has built up a very evil business. He leads gullible explorers into the Mountains of Malice, where he arranges for them to be captured by cyclops. In return for bringing them food, Farouk is given lightning bolts. These he sells for a great deal of hard currency. Business is far from regular, but the money he earns on his sporadic trips means he lives well between jobs.

JOURNEYWOMAN NADINE BINT-MAHU

Nadine believes the thunderstorms that rage through the Mountains of Malice are far from natural. In her opinion, they exist because somewhere in the mountains is an air elemental locus of unbelievable size and power. Until she finds the epicenter, something that has eluded her over the years, she is unsure whether it is the creation of rogue khamsin jinn seeking to conceal their existence from vengeful mortals, came into being over the corpse of the great dragon, Malys, or is the secret gateway Upuaut opened to allow him to enter the mortal world. She desperately hopes it is the latter, for then it might be possible to visit the celestial realm without first having to die, a journey without equal in recorded history.

Her explorations are hampered both by lesser dragons and the cyclops, both of whom resent intruders.

THE SCORPION KING

One reason the name of the Scorpion King is known is because of a sinister figure who wanders the wastes

CREATING HERBAL POISONS

As well as curative balms, herbalists can create a range of poisons from plants, herbs, and roots, as well as the venom of certain animals. See *Savage Worlds Deluxe* for the four types of poison a herbalist can create (knockout replaces the usual soporific remedy).

Unlike other herbal remedies, the purpose modifier for poisons is variable, set by the herbalist at the start of the process. This allows them to create weak, mild, or strong poisons. The modifier chosen for the poison also applies to the victim's Vigor roll, and a healer's Healing roll.

For instance, a cleric of Chactinax wants to create a very potent lethal poison. He assigns it a -4 modifier. This applies to his Knowledge (Alchemy) roll, as well as his victim's Vigor roll and any Healing roll to neutralize the poison.

Player characters who use poisons should suffer a Glory penalty—poisoning is not a praiseworthy or heroic act, even when employed against monsters.

POISONOUS PLANTS

Many plants can be turned into poisons. A few of the more well-known ones are described below.

* **Camel Bane:** A hardy, fragrant flower attractive to camels. The leaves can be crushed to make a knockout poison. It must be ingested to work.

* **Desert Tabac:** A wild variety of tabac plant whose dried leaves produce toxic smoke. Acts as a lethal poison, but must be smoked to work.

* **Goat Nuts:** Edible nut that produces toxin when consumed in large quantities. The seed oil can be distilled to make a venomous type poison.

* **Iblis' Finger:** When properly treated, the flesh of this long, thick black root of this desert bloom makes a lethal poison.

* **Poppy Oil:** A narcotic in small quantities, larger or purer doses act as a paralysis poison.

* **Slaves' Delight:** The clear liquid extracted from the petals of this delicate desert rose make a nearly undetectable knockout poison.

VENOMOUS BEASTS

While a slain mundane venomous creature is too mangled to harvest any venom, giant varieties are a different story. A successful Survival roll is required to harvest venom. Each success and raise nets one dose of the appropriate poison.

* **Giant Ant Warrior:** Victims must make a Vigor roll to avoid being Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

* **Giant Scorpion:** Lethal type poison.

* **Giant Spider:** Paralysis type poison.

* **Giant Viper:** Venomous type poison.

FESTIVAL TO CHACTINAX

THE NIGHT OF PENANCE

First new moon after failing a mission

Those who die by a cleric's hand are not just victims—they are sacrifices to Chactinax. While he is the god of treachery, he demands loyalty from his clergy. Any cleric who fails to slay a victim he has been contracted has committed a mortal sin, and the only way to seek penance is to undergo this often lethal rite.

He must gather enough scorpions to fill a large jar, and then thrust his hand into the vessel, holding it there for a short while. If he is stung, Chactinax is deemed to have given the assassin a warning. If he dies from the venom, Chactinax has repaid the treachery in kind.

In game terms, the GM must draw five cards from the action deck. Each black royal card (Jack through Ace) means the cleric has been stung and must make a Vigor roll to avoid succumbing to the venomous type poison. A cleric who survives the process is shrived of his sin. The cleric may seek medical attention to neutralize any venom that will kill him, but this counts as failing the rite, and the mortal sin remains. He may try to atone again at the start of the next month's new moon, but until such time he is stripped of his miracles.

under that title. In life he was a Hekatic noble, a governor of Niwt-em-Netry appointed by the pharaoh. By the time of his governance, Hekata had already deposed the old gods in favor of worshipping its pharaohs as living gods.

As the city grew wealthy, so the noble developed aspirations of becoming pharaoh himself. Knowing he lacked the strength to wage open war, he turned to worship of Chactinax and began planning an assassination.

He was betrayed by one of his lieutenants, and duly sentenced to death. No ordinary death awaited one who would seek to slay the living-god pharaoh. The noble was wrapped in bandages while still alive and placed in an unmarked sarcophagus (an act which would deny him access to the Afterlife), into which were placed dozens of highly venomous scorpions. His muffled screams were finally drowned out as the heavy lid was closed. He was buried in the deep desert with no grave goods, and no memorial stone to mark his passing.

When the necromantic energy surge of -302 washed over the desert, the nobleman awoke as an undead. Though he lacks the awesome might of a withered pharaoh, the venom of the scorpions tainted his withered corpse and unholy spirit, imbuing him with the power to summon and command scorpions, transforming the skin beneath his bandages into black scales, and causing his fingernails to take the form of scorpion's stingers.

Eight centuries have passed, but the noble's desire to become pharaoh has not diminished. He is also filled with thoughts of vengeance. Several attempts to enter Hekata met with failure, for his army of scorpions was easily crushed by the venom-resistant undead. For now, he walks the barren sands of the Scorpion Lands, an outcast who proclaims himself pharaoh over naught but mundane scorpions.

WAZIM THE HERMIT

A former citizen of Hamra, City of the Stone, Wazim had a spiritual epiphany many years ago. He left his family, adopted the Devoted creed, and wandered into the endless desert in search of Oneness. He eventually chose to settle in the foothills of the Scorpion Hills and lead the life of a hermit.

Wazim survives only by the good grace of the Creator, who sought fit to bring forth a spring from the southern slopes of the Scorpion Lands. The trickle is dreadfully slow (it takes one hour to fill a single waterskin), but it is sufficient for Wazim's needs. It is also enough to water his staple diet—a small number of juniper bushes. The trickle also attracts migrating birds, which he catches in a net and cooks.

Wazim sporadically ventures into the Scorpion Lands to alleviate the occasional pangs of boredom he feels, believing that the journey is good for his soul. The items he brings back, mostly pieces of pottery, though he has a few ancient coins and fragments of inscribed stone squirreled away, he trades with rare passers-by in return for their using his spring.

Why Come Here?

Desolate and remote, and with little hope of stumbling across helpful nomads should one find oneself in difficulty, the Scorpion Lands nonetheless have many locations that appeal to adventurers.

* Orders. The organization most likely to send members here is the Assassins, and they do so only rarely. Clerics of Qedeshet might be volunteered to explore the ruins, for there are many unexplored buildings here. Should the scorpionmen become a threat, then Shamash's cult is likely to send paladins to combat them, for they are seen as servants of Iblis. Clerics of Shamash, and Pegasus Guards, are more likely to be sent here on the trail of assassins who have struck down a dignitary of the Sultan. Any hero beholden to a noble might be ordered to come here on a mundane yet perilous task, such as collecting flamingo eggs or bringing back natron from the alkali flats.

* Glory. Scorpionmen are fearsome opponents, and there is much glory to be earned from slaying them. Unfortunately, they tend to dwell underground in warrens and caves they know inside out, which places attackers at a distinct disadvantage.

* **Treasure.** Ruins are found across the entire Scorpion Lands. Some were built by the arachnid inhabitants, others by the Hekatic Empire or jinn. Many have been thoroughly looted, but there is still ample opportunity to uncover lost knowledge or material wealth.

* **Passing Through.** While the Mountains of Malice and Firebarrier Mountains are natural barriers, the Scorpion Hills are traversable. For those seeking to cross between the central deserts, they make an ideal shortcut. Few nomads risk the journey, simply because a large camel train is more noticeable than a few wanderers.

Adventure Seeds

* An important person has been poisoned with a rare magical venom. It is slow acting, leaving its victim in excruciating pain while it slowly dissolves his internal organs. The only hope of creating a cure is a rare plant that grows only in the Scorpion Hills. A rich reward is offered to anyone who returns with a handful of the precious petals. Unfortunately, the flowers are considered sacred to the scorpionmen, and they dislike thieves.

* Scorpionmen accompanied by swarms of scorpions have begun raiding the eastern Jinn Road. The sheikh of Dry Water Oasis offers a reward to any heroes brave enough to put a stop to the attacks.

* A priest of Qedeshet and notable explorer has disappeared in the Scorpion Lands. The cult is seeking heroes to locate him and deduce his fate. His trail is winding and convoluted, for he visited many ruins, but clues eventually lead the heroes to the black idol. There they find a note inside a clay jar proclaiming the priest was about to enter the idol's maw.

Gods & Monsters

This section details one new inhuman god that can be worshipped by player characters, one minor deity, four monsters unique to the Scorpion Lands, and sample clerics of Chactinax.

CHACTINAX

Titles: Scorpion King, The Poisonous One, Backstabber, He Who Strikes from Concealment, Kinslayer, One Without Honor.

Aspects: Scorpions, scorpionmen, vengeance, assassins, poison, treachery.

Symbol: A scorpion's tail dripping a single drop of venom.

Priesthood: Venomous Hands (priests); Venomous Blades (paladins).

Herald: Chactinax's heralds appear as a Size +4 scorpion, but with four tails. Each stinger may be used to attack a different target with no multi-action penalty.

Holy Days: Priests are expected to hold special ceremonies before and after an assassination. The Night of Penance (see p. 8) is an individual high holy day.

FESTIVAL TO MARQOD

SUN HEALING DAY

Tamith Yaus al-Maat Alek Neteru

The story of how Shamash was poisoned by Iblis is told on page 10. This festival marks the sun god's recovery and the return of light and order. Although primarily a festival to honor Marqod, this day is also sacred to clerics of Shamash.

During the night before the festival, clerics of Shamash extinguish all lights in their temples, shrines, and homes, for during this time the universe was cast into darkness. Many spend the night drinking heavily or using hashish to simulate Shamash's poisoning. A small few go a step further and deliberately poison themselves. Usually this is a paralysis venom, but some prefer to test their faith with venomous grade poison. Neither activity constitutes a sin of immorality on this night.

Clerics of Marqod spend the night gathering medicinal herbs and creating herbal remedies concerned with curing poisons. Typically purgative and sobriety tonics are brewed.

As dawn nears, Marqod's clergy attend Shamash's temple, offering their remedies to the intoxicated clerics. These are consumed in the minutes before dawn breaks. As the tonics cleanse the toxins from the clerics' bodies, the sun appears in the western sky, symbolizing the cure of Shamash and a return to order in the universe.

For the rest of the day, Marqod's clergy offer free healing and herbal remedies to the general populace, but only with regard curing poison and its effects. Most citizens happily make a donation, an act which symbolizes Nintinugga (p. 10) being rewarded by achieving the status of a minor goddess. Any monies earned from such work must be donated to a temple of Marqod. To withhold the money is a major sin.

emonies before and after an assassination. The Night of Penance (see p. 8) is an individual high holy day.

Duties: To commit assassinations, to help others get revenge.

Sins: (Minor) being poisoned, harming a scorpion (even in self defense), accused of being an assassin (with evidence to back it up); (Major) killing a scorpion (even in self-defense), being caught in the act of murder; (Mortal) failing to carry out an assassination within the time set down in the contract.

Signature Power: *Quickness.*

Powers: *Analyze foe, armor, beast friend* (scorpions only), *bladebreaker, blast, bolt, boost/lower trait* (Agility, Strength, Vigor, Climbing, Fighting, Knowledge (Alchemy), Notice, and Stealth only), *burrow, champion*

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of the faith, deflection, detect/conceal, dispel, entangle, fatigue, fear, knockdown, prolonged blast, quickness, silence, slumber, smite, summon herald, wandering senses, weapon immunity, wilderness step.

Trappings: Clergy must use trappings related to scorpions whenever appropriate. *Armor* may be chitin plates, *entangle* a spectral scorpion's claw, and *wilderness step* transform the target's legs, for instance.

Special: Characters who take the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge and chose Chactinax as their patron may gain the Connection (Assassins) Edge instead of Connection (Chactinax), as outside of the scorpionmen's lands only they truly venerate him. The Order Hindrance would equally apply to the Assassins in this instance.

Although originally patron of the scorpionman race, Chactinax has long been worshipped by assassins, poisoners, and those bent on vengeance or treachery. The Assassins hold him in high regard, though they ignore his treacherous nature—treachery has no place amid their ranks. As such, this particular version of the god is the aspect worshipped by the infamous Assassins and more common assassins, and is not concerned with treachery.

During the God War, Iblis sought to kill Shamash, for without his presence the universe would fall into utter chaos. Unable to penetrate the sun god's palace, Iblis fed a scorpion his poisonous blood, transforming it from a relatively harmless arachnid into a monstrous, black-skinned creature of malicious intent.

Unseen, the scorpion, whom Iblis named Chactinax, stole into Shamash's palace and stung the sun god on his left ankle. Shamash at once collapsed in agony as the vile venom coursed through his veins. Alive but close to death, Shamash could not fulfill his duties, and so the universe was plunged into darkness and chaos. Shamash was eventually cured, though exactly how varies. Every cult has a story claiming how their chosen deity saved Shamash from death, and this restored order and light to the universe.

Believing Shamash destroyed, Iblis transformed Chactinax into a deity, made him one of his trusted generals, and imbued him with many powers. Unfortunately, Chactinax proved more adept at treachery than Iblis, and eventually broke from Iblis' ranks. In memory of this, he also became the god of treachery.

An older myth, one now considered heretical outside the cult of Iblis, tells that Iblis created Chactinax only after he was betrayed by the other gods. So the story goes, Iblis was promised a hand in the creation of the mortal world, but the gods later reneged on this, a slight for which he took revenge. Thus, while Iblis created the minor god of treachery, it was the other gods who first committed a treacherous act.

Regardless of the race depicting him, Chactinax is always portrayed in art as a black-skinned scorpionman of immense size and physical strength.

Only a handful of temples exist outside the scorpionmen's lands, and these are always found in Assassins' strongholds. At the center of the temple is a statue of Chactinax, a monstrous black-scaled scorpionman with

four tails. In front of this is a black urn, filled with scorpions. Those accused of a sin, or wishing to show their faith, must thrust their hand into the urn, braving the myriad scorpion stings. Shrines to the god are extremely rare, though people who seek revenge or plan treachery may create one to focus their negative emotions.

Chactinax's clergy (at least those following this write up) are all assassins. Paladins of the faith are regarded as proponents of the art, and are masters of stealthy death. Priests tend to serve as backup on assassination missions, scouts (locating targets and determining security measures), as middlemen, meeting potential clients and ensuring it is not a trap, or by manufacturing poisons, though there is nothing stopping them being assassins.

Ceremonies frequently involve thrusting one's hand into a bowl of scorpions, both to test one's nerve and to ensure Chactinax is pleased with the worshipper.

NINTINUGGA

Titles: The Soothing Hand of Marqod, Curer of Poisons, She Who Washes Away Toxins, Enemy of Chactinax, Bane of Assassins.

Aspects: Curing poisons.

Affiliations: Marqod.

Symbol: A severed scorpion's tail.

Priesthood: Healers of Venom (priests); Scorpions' Banes (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Death Day and Medicine Day (see *Realm Guide #4* for both) are high holy days, as is Sun Healing Day (p. 9).

Duties: To treat victims of poisoning, to slay venomous creatures.

Sins: (Minor) being poisoned, advocating the use of poison, getting drunk, refusal to fight a creature known to be venomous; (Major) allowing others to use or create poison, refusing to cure a victim of poisoning; (Mortal) creating poison, using poison.

Signature Power: *Succor*.

Powers: *Armor, boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Vigor, Healing, Knowledge (Alchemy), Survival only), *healing, sanctuary, speed*.

Trappings: Any except necromancy.

Special: Clerics have +2 on Knowledge (Alchemy) rolls to manufacture antitoxin, purgative, and sobriety brews, as well as healing and restorative brews intended to relieve the symptoms of poisoning. They suffer a -1 penalty to create all other remedies.

Though the various faiths disagree on who found the cure to Chactinax's venom, all agree it was Nintinugga, one of Marqod's herbalists, who created the actual remedy that cured Shamash. As reward, she was promoted to the status of a minor goddess and charged with teaching mortals how to neutralize poison and venom. While her primary aspect is concerned with healing, she often entered battle during the God War, both to provide curative tonics to poisoned warriors and help defeat the venomous servants of Chactinax and Iblis.

The Scorpion Lands of Old

Shrines to Nintinugga stand in every temple of Marqod. Often they take the form of a statue of an animal known to eat scorpions, such as baboons, meerkats, and desert owls. In farming communities, a shrine may be erected in the fields to keep away scorpions and other venomous pests. Sometimes stones marked with the holy symbol are placed at the corners of fields as a symbolic warding. Apothecaries typically display the goddess' holy symbol above their doorways to indicate they sell anti-toxins and purgative tonics.

Priests are most often found working in settlements. Here they act as healers, both curing poisons and other ailments, and as herbalists specializing in brews related to curing poisons and their effects. Paladins in settlements usually find work as pest exterminators, though they deal only with venomous creatures. Those who travel rarely go hunting for their goddess' enemies—not every venomous animal is a threat—though they do not hesitate to rid the desert of any they encounter. Though they lack investigative skills, they may also be hired to hunt down assassins, though usually they are concerned only with poisoners.

Ceremonies involve the creation of herbal brews (which the clerics are allowed to sell), the destruction of poisons, and the killing of venomous creatures.

Character Guidelines: Dedicated to slaying venomous creatures, clerics need a high Vigor die to avoid becoming victims themselves. The Hedge Magic Edge is essential to creating herbal remedies, and every cleric should invest in Healing and Knowledge (Alchemy).

CYCLOPS

While the scorpionmen may dominate the hills and plains, the Mountains of Malice are the domain of the last remaining cyclops tribes. Fond of human flesh, they see interlopers as nothing more than a tasty meal. It might be possible to trade with them for lightning bolts, but they demand live humans in payment.



LIGHTNING LORD

Lightning lords are the elite warriors of the cyclops race. Few tribes possess more than one or two of these mighty warriors, and many smaller tribes cannot boast even a single lord among their ranks.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Throwing d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: Dead Shot, Marksman, Mighty Throw

Gear: Big club (Str+d10; 2-hands); 5 lightning bolts

Treasure: Worthwhile

Special Abilities:

- * **Lightning Bolts:** Lightning bolts resemble short spears, with a crackling head of electricity instead of a blade. Range: 6/12/24, Damage 3d6, Small Burst Template.

- * **One Eye:** -2 to all trait rolls involving depth perception, such as Throwing.

- * **Size +2:** Cyclops stand over 8' tall.



STORM LORD

The nobles of the tribes are the storm lords. Worshipers of a minor deity known as Adad, Father of Storms, they are the only spellcasters known to cyclops.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Throwing d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Big club (Str+d10; 2-hands); 3 lightning bolts

Treasure: Worthwhile

Special Abilities:

- * **Lightning Bolts:** Lightning bolts resemble short spears, with a crackling head of electricity instead of a blade. Range: 6/12/24, Damage 3d6, Small Burst Template.
- * **One Eye:** -2 to all trait rolls involving depth perception, such as Throwing.
- * **Powers:** *Blast* (lightning strike), *deflection* (winds), *smite* (electricity), *sphere of might* (miniature thunderstorm), *storm* (thunderstorm), *summon elemental* (air, lightning, storm, thunder, thunderstorm only)
- * **Size +2:** Cyclops stand over 8' tall.

PRIESTS & PALADINS

These stats represent typical human clerics of Chactinax. As always, the GM should adjust their stats as necessary to create clerics of other races.

PALADIN OF CHACTINAX

Paladins are assassins, trained to infiltrate the palaces and fortifications of their victims and deal a swift death. Contrary to popular belief, they are not psychotic murderers. They kill only to contract, which they honor to the letter, and engage in meticulous planning before embarking on the actual assassination attempt. This particular example is a member of the Assassins.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Lock-picking d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Orders, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Assassin, Brotherhood of Assassins (two cover identities), Disciple of Chactinax

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Agility, Strength, Vigor, Climbing, Fighting, Notice, and Stealth only), *quickness*, *slumber*, *smite*

Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8), dagger (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), 1d2 vials of poison

Treasure: Worthwhile

PRIEST OF CHACTINAX

Priests specialize in brokering assassination contracts, information gathering regarding targets, and the manufacture of poisons. Most are eloquent, educated, and urbane, the antithesis of how citizens imagine followers of Chactinax to be.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Alchemy) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Orders

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Connections (Assassins), Hedge Magic

Powers: *Analyze foe, quickness, wandering senses*

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), 1d4 vials of poison

Treasure: Worthwhile

SCORPIONMAN

Though absent from the surface world for long centuries and largely confined to legend, the scorpionmen are preparing to emerge into the light once more. As well as their powerful and much-feared warriors, there are members of the race that pose a greater threat.

Mixing It Up: Not every scorpionman need have venomous type poison. One with lethal venom is a more dangerous foe, while ones with paralysis or knockout venom present entirely different challenges. The latter also allow the GM to capture the heroes.



PRIEST

Scorpionmen society is run by priests of Chactinax, the great scorpion god, on behalf of the Scorpion King. Many of his priests dream of rekindling the glory of the empire, though always at the expense of their rivals.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Faith d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Edges: Command, Fervor

Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8)

Treasure: Worthwhile

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Chitin.
- * **Fleet Footed:** Scorpionmen roll a d8 for their running die, instead of a d6.
- * **Poison (-2):** Anyone wounded or Shaken by a stinger attack must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of venomous type poison.
- * **Powers:** Priests know the following spells: *armor* (harder skin), *bolt* (flying scorpion stingers), *burrow* (digging claws), *entangle* (gigantic scorpion claws), *fatigue* (poison), *quickness*.
- * **Stinger:** Str+d6, plus poison.

- * **Wall Walker:** Scorpionmen can move their full Pace, and even run, along walls and ceilings.

SWARM MOTHER

As the name implies, swarm mothers are always female. Attached to their backs are many hundreds of tiny scorpions. The swarm mother can shake these loose and order them to attack her foes. They are a sub-class of priest, possessed of limited powers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Faith d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Treasure: Meager

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Chitin.
- * **Fleet Footed:** Scorpionmen roll a d8 for their running die, instead of a d6.
- * **Poison:** Anyone wounded or Shaken by a stinger attack must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of venomous type poison.
- * **Scorpion Call:** Swarm mothers know *beast friend* and *summon beast*, but can only affect scorpions, scorpion swarms, and giant scorpions.
- * **Stinger:** Str+d6, plus poison.
- * **Swarm Mother:** As an action, a swarm mother can shake off her scorpions. These form an instant swarm (see below), which acts on the same action card as their host. A swarm mother typically carries just a single swarm. These swarms are obedient to the swarm mother, and usually do not attack scorpionmen.
- * **Wall Walker:** Scorpionmen can move their full Pace, and even run, along walls and ceilings.



SWARM, SCORPION

Found only in arid regions (or any part of the Scorpion Lands), scorpion swarms can quickly kill a fully-grown adult with their potent venom. Fills a Medium Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Treasure: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Poison (+0):** Anyone Shaken or wounded by a scorpion swarm must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of venomous type poison.
- * **Sting:** Scorpions swarms inflict dozens of tiny stings every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.